

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking on the
Commission's Proposed Policies and Programs
Governing Low-Income Assistance Programs.

Rulemaking 01-08-027
(Filed August 23, 2001)

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S RULING SOLICITING
COMMENTS ON A PROPOSED INCREASE IN FUNDING
FOR PHASE 2 OF THE LOW-INCOME ENERGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

In Resolution E-3646, dated March 26, 2000, the Commission ordered the Energy Division to conduct a Needs Assessment Study of the low-income energy programs administered by investor-owned utilities in California. In that Resolution, the Commission divided the Needs Assessment into two phases and set funding levels for each phase of the study. Phase 1 of the Needs Assessment was begun in June 2001. The objective of Phase I was to gather and report on available data and to design Phase 2, the primary data-gathering phase.

From October 2001 through March 2002, Energy Division held a series of workshops to obtain public input on developing the objectives for Phase 2 of the Needs Assessment Study and a draft Request For Proposal (RFP) for Phase 2. The draft Phase 1 report and draft RFP for Phase 2 were submitted to the Commission by the Energy Division on April 3, 2002. The Assigned Commissioner solicited comments on the draft report and RFP on May 9, 2002.

The April 3, 2001 draft report identifies the Phase 2 study objectives, identifies data gaps to be filled as part of Phase 2, and discusses the design of Phase 2. The draft report also includes the proposed RFP for conducting Phase 2.

Initial funding for Phase 2 of the Needs Assessment was authorized at \$888,600 in Resolution E-3646. That funding level was based on cost information received from the Low Income Advisory Board and interested parties. Since then, the scope, work tasks, and objectives of the Phase 2 study have been expanded to include an in-home survey of low-income customers' weatherization needs, a description of the various methods/options for gathering information on demographic characteristics of CARE participants, the relative accuracy of those methods when used to develop CARE penetration rates for sub-sectors of the low-income population, data collection requirements and costs for developing penetration goals and penetration rates that are disaggregated based on demographic characteristics, ethnic demographic characteristics of the small and multi-jurisdictional utilities, economic demographics for Mountain Utilities, and income and household size data specific to Avista Utilities for the purpose of estimating the number of CARE eligible households in its service territory.

Due to the expansion of the scope, work tasks and objectives of the Phase 2 study, it appears that the initial funding authorized for Phase 2 may be inadequate for Phase 2 in its current design. Resolution E-3646 delegates authority to the Assigned Commissioner in this proceeding to increase the funding for the Needs Assessment.

Pursuant to a request from the Commission's Energy Division, the utilities recently provided information regarding costs of performing in-home weatherization surveys. In addition, the Phase 1 contractor estimated costs for completing the recently added Phase 2 tasks. Based on this information, Energy Division recommends that the funding for Phase 2 of the Needs Assessment Study be increased by \$373,900: from \$888, 600 to \$1,262,500. Interested parties

are requested to comment on whether or not \$1,262,500 is a reasonable and adequate funding level for completing Phase 2 of the Needs Assessment Study.

IT IS RULED that:

1. Interested parties' comments on the proposed funding level of \$1,262,500 for Phase 2 of the Low-Income Needs Assessment Study are due within 20 days from the date of this ruling. Replies to interested parties' comments are due five days thereafter.

2. All comments and reply comments required by today's ruling shall be filed at the Commission's Docket Office and served electronically on all appearances and the state service list in this proceeding and the Low Income Oversight Board (LIOB). A list of the LIOB members and their addresses is attached. Service by United States mail is optional, except that a hard copy shall be mailed to Judge Meg Gottstein. In addition, if there is no electronic mail address available, the electronic mail is returned to the sender, or the recipient informs the sender of an inability to open the document, the sender shall immediately arrange for alternate service (regular United States mail shall be the default, unless another means—such as overnight delivery—is mutually agreed upon). Parties that prefer a hard copy or electronic file in original format in order to prepare analysis and filings in this proceeding may request service in that form as well. The current service list for this proceeding is available on the Commission's web page, www.cpuc.ca.gov.

Dated August 9, 2002, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ CARL WOOD
Carl Wood
Assigned Commissioner

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have by mail this day served a true copy of the original attached Assigned Commissioner's Ruling Soliciting Comments on a Proposed Increase in Funding for Phase 2 of the Low-Income Energy Needs Assessment on all parties of record in this proceeding or their attorneys of record.

Dated August 9, 2002, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ FANNIE SID

Fannie Sid

N O T I C E

Parties should notify the Process Office, Public Utilities Commission, 505 Van Ness Avenue, Room 2000, San Francisco, CA 94102, of any change of address to insure that they continue to receive documents. You must indicate the proceeding number on the service list on which your name appears.

ATTACHMENT

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NOTE: The selection of a Board member from the Governor's Office has not yet been made.

(END ATTACHMENT)